

**“The Glorious Appearing”**  
**Titus 2:11-14**

**December 6, 2015**

**SI:** This is Advent season. Advent means coming.

It’s a celebration of the coming of the Son of God into the world.

And traditionally the church has used Advent season not only to focus on Christ’s first coming at Christmas, but also on his Second Coming at the end of the age.

The rationale is that the Old Testament saints spent their lives looking forward to Christ’s coming.

Adam and Eve looked forward, Abraham and Jacob did,

David, Isaiah, and the prophets did.

Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna did.

And their anticipation of his coming transformed them.

It made them holy and happy people.

We too should look forward to Jesus coming. It will make us holy and happy.

And what better way to celebrate Christmas itself,

than to prepare for it by looking forward to His return.

So we’re going to walk in the footsteps of many, many Christians through the ages by focusing on Jesus’ Second Coming these four Sundays. Do so in three ways.

1. Through our music.
2. Advent wreath, five candles for Sundays and Christmas, build anticipation. Focus on OT promises of his coming, those fulfilled, future promises as well. Asked some of our youth to read those passages.
3. Study of four great New Testament passages on Christ’s Second Coming.

**INTRO:** The Chilean mining accident of 2010 has been back in the news lately. That's because a new movie has come out about it starring Antonio Banderas.

The name of the movie is "The 33."

That's how the miners identified themselves in the famous note that they taped to the first drill head the broke through into their tunnel.

I haven't seen the movie but I watched some of the original footage on Youtube.

The rescue crew on the surface didn't know if any of the men were alive or not. They had been drilling for 17 days, trying to hit some of the lower tunnels of mine.

These lower tunnels were half a mile underground. Finally they hit one. And when they winched up the drill bit, here was this note taped to it.

In big red letters it said: "We are fine in the shelter. The 33."

On this video I watched, some of the miners described

the condition they were in physically and mentally after 17 days.

They had very little to eat, all of them had lost about 20 pounds.

They could hear the exploratory drills, but one after another, those drills missed their tunnel, so they would hear them come down to their level and stop.

They knew that finding them would be like a needle in a haystack.

They seriously discussed asphyxiating themselves with exhaust from one of the diesel machines so wouldn't have to face starvation in the darkness.

And then, one of the drills punched through the ceiling of their tunnel.

Here's what one miner said about that moment:

"I was so weak, I couldn't even stand and then all of a sudden, I found myself jumping for joy. It was like celebrating New Year's Eve or having a newborn child."

Those men were on the brink of collapse physically and mentally but they were revived by hope. There was still a half a mile of solid rock above them.

They would end up spending 52 more days in the hole but they had hope.

Without hope people grow weary and die. With hope people press on and live.

Let's take this story of hope and use it to introduce a bigger spiritual picture.

The Bible says that because of sin the human race is

"without hope and without God in the world."

What that means is that without Jesus Christ—

the future for every person is grim.

All there is to look forward to is an aging body, death, and a dark eternity.

If that were the whole story, we would be truly hopeless. But it's not!

Look at this passage, see how it starts:

“The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”

That's Jesus' first coming. That's Christmas!

That's the manger in Bethlehem and Jesus coming in humility and grace.

Then it says that we—

“wait for our blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

That's Jesus' second coming. His appearance in glory at the end of the age.

This is really an amazing passage. It's perfect for Advent.

Because it mentions both comings of Christ.

Paul is saying the Christian life is looking back in faith to Jesus' first coming.

And it is looking forward with hope to his second coming.

Someone has said that hope in the Bible is like a schoolboy

waiting for school to be over and summer vacation to begin.

It's certain, it's coming. That hope sustains him during dreary school days.

Paul calls our hope the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior.

That word “glorious” is crucial.

It means wonderful things for your future.

And as you hope for his coming, and all the wonderful things it will mean for you,

that gives you a defense against weariness, despondency, and discouragement.

More than that, it gives you actual power in the fight of Christian life.

Like those miners, hope gave them the power to fight for life.

But it takes deliberate concentration on Christ's second coming

to bring that hope home to your heart. That's why we need to study this passage.

So let's look at it under two headings:

1. The glory of Christ's coming
2. The power of our blessed hope

## **MP#1 The glory of Christ's coming**

Vs. 13 “the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”  
Glorious is the Greek word doxa. We use it in the word doxology.

It's an expansive word that has connotations of splendor, grandeur, praise, honor, power, and kingdom.

And Paul is saying that the glory of Christ's appearing—the splendor, grandeur, honor, power, and kingdom, of his appearing is our salvation.

What does that mean?

The best way I have found for understanding this is to remember that the Bible speaks of our salvation in three tenses.

Our salvation is past, present, and future.

Understanding this is very helpful and necessary for the Christian life.

I know I've covered this in year's past, but let's go over it again.

### **First, there is a past tense of salvation**

You've been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin. It's done. It happened.

You can personally say: I've been saved. I've been pardoned by God.

Romans. 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.”

I'm no longer condemned. Nothing I've done or can do will separate me from the love of God in Christ. I'm part of the family. I'm a son of God.

So, in answer to the question: Are you saved? You can say:

Yes, I was saved when . . . and then tell your story. Your personal testimony.

When I was 9 years old, parents read Bible to me, I put my faith in Jesus.

You could also say:

Yes, I was saved 2,000 years ago on a hill outside Jerusalem, when a perfect man, the Son of God died in my place.

The theological name for past-tense salvation is justification.

### **Second, there is a present tense of salvation**

You are being saved from the power and pollution of sin.

Present tense salvation is like walking through a burned house.

Some friends of ours once had a fire in their kitchen.

The fire department saved their house—but what a mess!

The smell of smoke was everywhere, even closets, wet and burned things.

There was so much work to be done to make it habitable again.  
But they had good homeowners insurance.  
So they had the money, tools, and time to get it done.  
You've been saved. The fire of condemnation is out, but what a mess!  
Your heart is still full of all sorts of ungodly attitudes and habits—  
you have lots of fear, self-pity, anger, boredom, very little joy, self control.  
But, God is saving you. He's working and he wants you to work too.  
“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Paul says in Philippians.  
The seed of the new life has been planted—joy, courage, self-control growing.  
By grace the Holy Spirit works in you, empowering you, changing you—  
and you participate in this by fighting against sin—  
saying no to ungodliness, worldly passions, living self-controlled life.  
You can personally say: I'm being saved. God is at work saving me from sin.  
The theological name for present-tense salvation is sanctification.

### **Third, there is a future tense of salvation**

You will be saved from the presence of sin and every consequence of sin.  
That's what this passage is about. This is the glorious appearing of Christ.  
Paul says in Romans “our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”

What does that mean? Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed?  
He can't be talking about our justification. That's happened and done.  
He's talking about the future tense of salvation.  
The day will come when you will be saved from all the effects of sin.  
On that day you will finally become the person you were created to be,  
perfectly reflecting image of God in your unique way.  
The theological name for future-tense salvation is glorification.

So when does your glorification happen? At the Second Coming.  
It happens when the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ  
punches through the ceiling of human history.

The doctrine of glorification means that there is something much better  
than going to heaven when you die.  
Heaven is wonderful. To be absent from body is to be present with the Lord.  
When a Christian dies, you are delivered from all pain and sorrow.  
You are greeted with the welcoming face of Christ.  
You are reunited with loved ones who died in the faith.

You are in the company of the spirits of righteous men made perfect (Heb 12).  
But heaven is a spiritual existence.  
And that's the problem with heaven.

Even though the Bible makes it clear we can exist as spiritual beings in heaven,  
and have self-consciousness and communicate and experience emotions.  
That's not how we were made. We were made as physical and spiritual beings.  
God made us with bodies. Bodies animated by our spirits.

The death of our bodies is a consequence of sin.  
So going to heaven when you die does not deliver you from death.  
Your body is still here on earth turning to dust in the grave.  
The final consequence of sin has yet to be destroyed.  
That will happen when Savior comes in glory.  
The bodies of believers will be raised immortal, incorruptible,  
as complete persons with bodies and souls united.  
And we will be transformed into the glorious likeness of Jesus Christ.

Paul says: "We will bear the likeness of the man from heaven."  
And as powerful and beautiful people, we will reign with Christ.  
Reign over what? Over this world made new.  
When Jesus comes, not only will our bodies be raised in glory,  
all creation will be restored.  
A new heaven and a new earth (that's the biblical language)  
with all the loveliness and potential of the original creation restored  
The Smoky Mountains in the fall, the water of the Gulf stirred up by a storm,  
the intricacies of nature. My grandmother grew orchids, had dozens of varieties.  
Looking at them closely was amazing.  
The most lovely and grandest things you've seen just shadows of the new creation.  
Bible gives hints and rumors—singing trees, jubilant fields, wine-drenched hills.

Finally, Jesus Christ Himself will be fully glorified.  
Began to be glorified when he rose from the grave,  
further glorified when he ascended into heaven.  
final glory when he becomes "the firstborn among many brothers"  
God will not be satisfied until His church, His Creation, and Christ are glorified.  
That is the blessed hope of believers.  
Nothing less than the transformation of all things at the coming of Christ.

You can personally say: I will be saved. I'm going to be glorified with Christ.

He's going to come. He's going to punch through ceiling of this world.

So how does the blessed hope of His coming help you in this life?

Does it help you at all or is this just a pie in the sky by and by?

This is a very realistic and very helpful doctrine.

## **MP#2 The power of our blessed hope**

In this passage Paul is describing salvation. Look how he describes it:

It's saying 'no' to ungodliness and worldly passions, it's living live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age . .

That's what it means to be saved—to live a self-controlled, upright and godly life.

Those are some powerful words. Easy to be overwhelmed with them.

Just take the matter of self-control. Are you self-controlled?

What about your thoughts? Do you control them, or do they control you?

Even Christians can think terrible things. If they were exposed, we would be humiliated. Christ wants you to control your thoughts. Saved you for that.

What about your words? Are you self-controlled in your speech?

Or do you bless God on Sunday and curse people on Monday.

What about your bodily appetites?

Are you self-controlled in food, drink, luxuries and entertainments—  
or do the demands of your body control you?

What about your sex life? Biblical sex ethic very clear. As CS Lewis put it:

“Either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence”

You could go through this whole list like that and come out quite discouraged.

But what does Paul say right in the middle of this?

We're waiting for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our Savior.

Jesus is coming in glory to glorify us.

What's Paul's pastoral point in these verses?

He's saying that the hope of Jesus' second coming helps you in two ways.

### **First, hope in his coming gives you incentive for holiness.**

If you have a lively hope that Jesus is coming to glorify you—  
that will be a powerful incentive now for holy living.

It will help you face every moral decision with a new strength.

Paul doesn't say: You better do good or you'll be sorry when Jesus comes back.

No, Paul says something very different.

He says that Jesus came in grace to save you so that you could be holy.

He did all these wonderful things for you and he wants you to be self-controlled.

It's so important to him that you become a holy, self-controlled person,  
that he's coming in glory to finish the work in you.



He is going to make you perfectly good and make all things around you good.  
So, Paul reasons, if that is the future Jesus has for you, then how can you do  
anything less than try now to be the man or woman he is going to make you to be?  
When Jesus returns he will make into a man or woman  
who always and only thinks noble thoughts,  
and who always and only speaks loving and true words,  
and who always and only does what is good.  
Then why settle for being anything less than what you will be one day?

In one of the Narnia books, *The Magician's Nephew*,  
there is a London cab driver—he's a salt of the earth sort of man.  
Through magic he is taken out of London and into another realm.  
There he sees Aslan, the great lion Christ-figure in Lewis's stories.  
Aslan is creating a beautiful new world. He's speaking it into existence.  
And as the London cab driver sees this new, perfect world appear he says:  
"Glory be. I'd have been a better man all my life if I'd known there would be things like this."

That's the spirit.  
One day you will see great and wonderful things when Jesus returns.  
What a great incentive to be a better man or woman.

### **Second, hope in Jesus coming gives you patience with failure.**

There are some Christians who struggle with despair  
when they fall into the same sins over and over.  
Is this never going to change? Am I ever going to be better.

While there is such thing as healthy self-evaluation—sober judgment.  
There is also self-accusation that plays into devil's hands.  
Start to doubt God's grace at work within you.  
Fall into spiritual depression.

If I'm talking about you, know who you are.  
Not true of all Christians, but certain personality types—introspective.

Jesus is going to come back, when he does, sight of his face is going to perfect you.  
All the fears and doubts you struggle with, all failures will be gone.  
So be patient with yourself in failure. He is coming to make you pure.  
Applies as well to the way you view failures of other people—  
particularly fellow believers in the church.

When he returns, glorious appearing will glorify them.

To mention C.S. Lewis again.

He says that if you could see the person sitting next to you in church as he or she will be after Christ returns, you would be tempted to fall down in worship.

All the more reason to be patient with your brothers and sisters now.

The Lord has great things planned for each of them,  
and you will be amazed one day to see what they become.

**CONC:** A number of years ago we were on vacation in North Carolina.

Worshipped at a church near Highlands.

What was peculiar about the sanctuary, a large mural on the wall behind pulpit.

It was a North Carolina nature scene—foreground mountain stream,

it looked out over a beautiful valley surrounded by mountains.

But what really made this painting unusual was the inclusion of two figures.

First, in the foreground, by the stream was an unusual, muscular, robed figure

with a scroll in his hand, pointing up into the sky—

And up in the sky, in the distance, coming over the mountains,

was a shining angel with a trumpet.

I looked in the bulletin, hoping I would find an explanation, but couldn't.

So I started pondering this unusual picture.

First thing I noticed was that this was not an imaginary valley—

it was the actual valley just down the road from the church itself—

It was a view from the road between Highlands and Cashiers.

The angel with the trumpet—that was easy.

Bible says over and over Jesus' second coming announced

with trumpet blast by the archangel of God.

Who was this muscular robed figure in the foreground,

with scroll in hand, pointing up to the sky?

Seemed to me that he was the angel in Revelation 10.

Described as a mighty angel, feet on the earth, scroll in his hand,

which represents all the promises of Christ's return.

What this picture seemed to be saying, what I guess this church wanted to say—

Life for us is not just nature, it's not just what we can see in the here and now.

One day, just as we have been told in the Bible, trumpet will sound,  
Jesus Christ will return, not in a spiritual sense—but he will really appear,  
in this world, in our valley, and we will see him.

So we live our lives in the hope of His coming.

Make that your goal, to have a lively hope of his coming—  
and the glory that you will enjoy that you want to live a holy life  
in anticipation of that day—patiently waiting, even in your failures,  
for him to make you glorious.